



**UPPER COLORADO RIVER
INTERAGENCY FIRE MANAGEMENT**
NPS Colorado National Monument
BLM Northwest Colorado District
USFS White River National Forest



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**USDA Forest Service
White River National Forest**
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Prescribed burn scheduled this spring at Avalanche Creek and east of Filoha Meadows

REDSTONE, Colo.— (February 29, 2016)- Pending favorable weather conditions, Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management crews and partners will conduct prescribed burn operations on National Forest System lands at Avalanche Creek and east of Filoha Meadows, roughly 9 miles south of Carbondale east of State Highway 133. This is a continuation of the prescribed burning that occurred last spring.

Up to 900 acres of mountain shrub, pinyon-juniper, and aspen vegetation will be ignited. Operations will be conducted over 3-5 days spread across 2-4 weeks in March, April and May, according to a burn plan that prescribes specific weather and smoke dispersion conditions in order to proceed. Crews will be responsible for igniting vegetation, monitoring control and spread of fire and smoke, ensuring fire is held by control features, and monitoring fire behavior for meeting project objectives. Some 10-20 firefighters, 3-5 engines, and a helicopter will be used for these functions.

The public is reminded: Do not call 911 or emergency services even though smoke may be visible from various locations along the Highway 133 corridor. Most of the smoke will dissipate during the day, although some nighttime smoke may remain in valley bottoms as temperatures drop. Any carry-over smoke is expected to be of short term occurrence.

According to White River National Forest Fuels Specialist Jim Genung, “Our plans are to initiate burn operations only if we can do so safely and effectively. Since we started planning for this project, local landowners, Home Owner’s Association’s and the local Crystal River Caucus have supported our burn plan.”

The intent of the project is to create improved habitat conditions for wintering bighorn sheep, deer and elk; promote nutrient recycling of fire-adapted vegetation communities; and to decrease the fuel load that has accumulated over the years.

“Using fire is a cost-effective way to stimulate growth of winter browse for big game, manage shrub cover for native wildlife, and help regenerate aspen stands that have become decadent and in decline,” said Phil Nyland, Forest Service Wildlife Biologist. A secondary benefit of the project will be the reduction of fuel loads in the mountain shrub and aspen vegetation adjacent to homes in the Swiss Village and Flloha Meadows areas.

“This project is part of a large-scale effort being conducted over a 10-year period in partnership between the Forest Service, Pitkin County, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to improve habitat for elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep and other native wildlife across 45,000 acres on White River National Forest,” said Karen Schroyer, Aspen-Sopris District Ranger.

Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information, please visit: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>.

Additional information regarding this project and the objectives of the work is available at the Forest Service office at 620 Main St., Carbondale or by calling 970-963-2266.

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